



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 21 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
21 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union
(As of 5:30 AM
EDT)

Soviet and other Eastern European forces have now occupied Prague and other major population centers. This well-coordinated operation used extensive airlift as well as overland movement.

Some gunfire has been reported from Prague where citizens apparently shot at Soviet troops. There are no indications that Czechoslovak military units are resisting.

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The National Assembly has demanded that "allied" forces be withdrawn, but the Soviets insist the intervention was at the request of the Czechoslovak Government. The whereabouts of Dubcek and other key party members are unknown, but they presumably are holed up in the central committee building, which is surrounded by Soviet troops.

So far there has been little reaction from other capitals except those of the Soviet allies who predictably echoed the Russian line.

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In light of last night's developments, it is a good guess that this moderate faction in the Politburo was overruled in the last 24 hours or so, and that the intervention was then ordered.

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2. France

There is a mood of uneasiness and uncertainty in France as fall approaches, and with it the prospects of renewed violence.

The government has announced plans that would seem to go a long way toward meeting the student demands of last spring, but the Latin Quarter is astir again with pressure for more and faster educational reform. Already there is agitation to seize the universities when classes resume.

Agriculture is another problem area. Rising production costs could spark violent farmer demonstrations like those of 1967. On the labor front, things look brighter and serious worker discontent does not seem to be brewing now.

3. Soviet Union

The regime is walking carefully where some of its more prominent intellectual dissenters are concerned. Physicist Andrey Sakharov, whose essay proposing Soviet-US cooperation was published last month in the New York Times, was recently ordered to recant. Sakharov refused to do so--and got away with it. Other prestigious mavericks also have been handled with care.

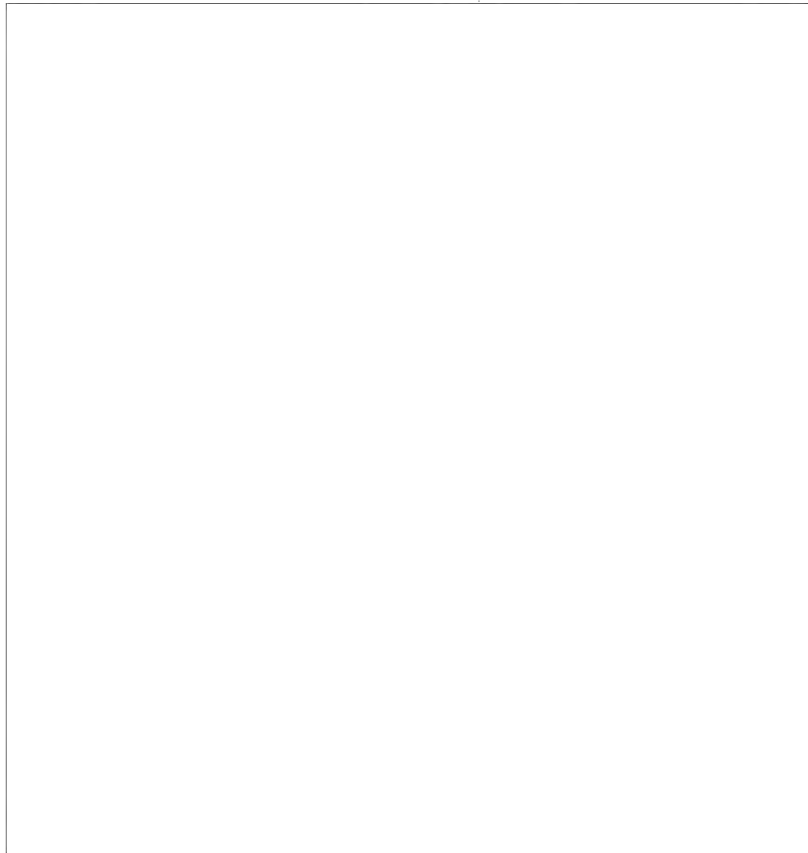
The Soviet leaders probably hope they can avoid creating martyrs--as they did with the trial of two intellectuals earlier this year. Lesser known members of the intelligensia are still quietly going to jail.

4. Communist China

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5. South Vietnam

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6. Bolivia

General Vasquez, the recently fired army chief of staff, openly broke with Barrientos last night. In a radio address he announced his intention to "raise the standard of rebellion." Vasquez may get some support from already rebellious students, but he is not likely to find much in the army, which has gone on full alert. The US Embassy suspects the army may use this as an opportunity to take over the government.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Propaganda On Tay Ninh: Communist propaganda has so far played the recent Viet Cong attacks in the Tay Ninh area in low key. Hanoi's international service in English on 19 August described the fighting only as a "series" of Communist attacks. An even more authoritative commentary in the Hanoi party daily the next day said that the Tay Ninh attacks had contributed to the current "general offensive"--an expression the Communists use to characterize the fighting since Tet. There is still no effort, at least in radio propaganda, to term the action a kickoff for a new offensive or to characterize it as the much-heralded "third phase" of the general offensive. Liberation Radio has not yet commented significantly on the fighting.

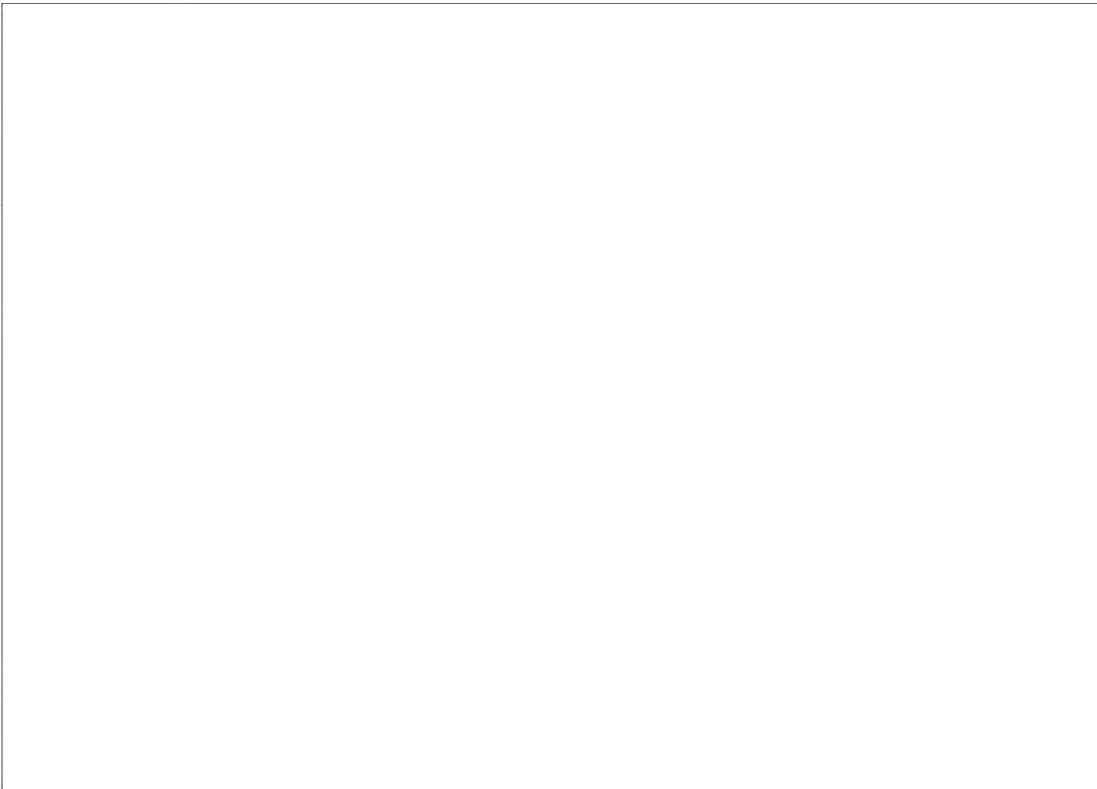
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Hien to the Boat Races: King Savang, Premier Souvanna, and most of the diplomatic corps in Vientiane will be attending the annual boat races in Luang Prabang which begin on Friday. North Vietnamese Ambassador Hien, the dean of the corps, plans to attend too. Since his return to Laos, Hien has paid court to the King while studiously ignoring Souvanna and his government, and this will be the first time the ambassador and the premier have appeared at the same function. The US Embassy comments that it will be interesting to watch Savang, Souvanna, and Hien maneuvering at close quarters.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

More on US Elections: North Vietnam's army newspaper has again scored the election campaign as "ballyhoo" being generated by US political parties to fool the voters. In a propagandistic analysis of the US political scene, it found little substance in the Republican platform and charged that the party had not yet faced the "most important Vietnam problems," which, it went on to say, could be easily resolved by US withdrawal.

Despite the intense private interest shown by North Vietnamese officials in the US presidential campaign, this propaganda commentary again offers only standard Marxist contempt for the US electoral process, while giving no clue to Hanoi's true attitudes toward different candidates.

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